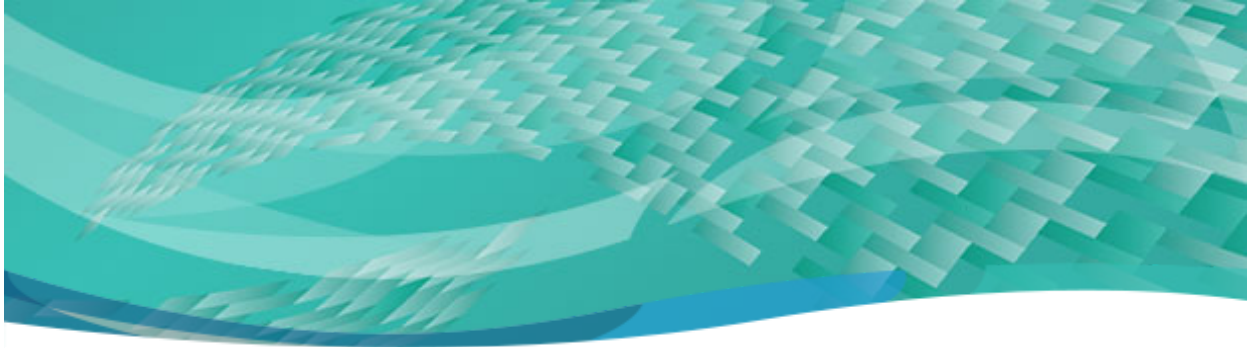




Government of Northwest Territories



Diane Thom: First Confirmed Case of COVID-19 in the NWT - March 20, 2020 News Conference

Ministers' Statements and Speeches

Yellowknife — March 21, 2020

Good afternoon.

Today, our territory confirmed its first case of COVID-19.

First of all, I'd like to echo Premier Cochrane's message of support to those affected.

These things are hard — for the individuals who contract the virus, for friends, for families, and for our communities.

Our thoughts are with you. And so too are our actions.

And to that end, NWT Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Kaml Kandola has issued an order prohibiting entry of non-residents to the Northwest Territories by land, air, or port with limited exceptions, and requiring by order that all returning residents must self-isolate in Yellowknife, Fort Smith, Hay River, or Inuvik.

These measures are drastic. They will be challenging. But they are necessary.

This government is dedicating all available resources to pushing back the spread of this virus.

We're testing at a rate double that of Canada's as-a-whole so we can trace and respond to infection quickly.

We're marshalling all available resources to bolster our healthcare response.

And no option is off-the-table as we move forward.

I want to send a strong message to communities across the Northwest Territories today.

The threat COVID-19 poses to our territory is real.

And the challenges we now face are significant.

We must strictly follow the advice of our Chief Public Health Officer as she works to respond to this crisis.

And if you don't, you are hurting our communities, and hampering our response.

We're all in this together. It is on all of us to do our part.

And I have confidence today, with the leadership and expertise of Dr. Kandola, and the strength of our communities, that we can band together, help each other, and change our lifestyles to combat COVID-19.

I will now pass it off to Dr. Kami Kandola to provide more details.